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CHARACTER and REWARD

OF THE

FAITHFUL SERVANT, *May 6. 1773.*
J.D.

CONSIDERED AND IMPROVED

from the author

IN A

S E R M O N,

Preached at BRIDGWATER,

IN THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET,

On LORD'S DAY, March 10, 1793;

On Occasion of the much-lamented Death of the

Rev. THOMAS WATSON,

By JOSHUA TOULMIN, A. M.

Published at earnest Request.

Being dead, He yet speaketh.

PAUL.

TAUNTON:

Printed by T. NORRIS, and Sold by J. JOHNSON, No. 72,

St. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD, LONDON.

—
PRICE SIX-PENCE.

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TO THE
CONGREGATION OF PROTESTANT DISSENTERS
LATELY UNDER THE PASTORAL CARE
OF THE

REVEREND THOMAS WATSON ;

TO THE
REV. THOMAS WATSON, OF CHICHESTER,
MRS. MARY BAGEHOT AND MR. JACOB WATSON
HIS DESCENDANTS,

AND TO MR. ROBERT BAGEHOT, OF LANGPORT,
MERCHANT, HIS SON-IN-LAW.

THE FOLLOWING SERMON IS INSCRIBED,
AS AN UNFEIGNED TOKEN OF CORDIAL SYMPATHY
WITH THEM,
AND A MERITED TRIBUTE OF RESPECT AND AFFECTION
TO HIS
DECEASED FRIEND,

BY JOSHUA TOULMIN.

TAUNTON, March 16, 1793.

Lately Published by Joshua Toulmin, A. M.

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THE
CHARACTER AND REWARD
OF THE
FAITHFUL SERVANT.

ON such occasions as that, on which I now rise up to address you, my Christian Friends, it is usual to dwell on those affecting views of mortality to which they call our thoughts. The mind, disposed to sorrow, loves to dwell on its loss; and mournful reflections follow one another in quick succession. It would be easy from the variety, in which they offer themselves, to select one suitable to the present sadness of our minds: but a subject of this nature, though in itself proper, and tenderly pathetic, might too much wound your spirits and mine. The event, which we lament, is awful*.

* Mr. Watson died on Tuesday the 5th of March, having preached the Lord's Day preceding with more than usual spirits and vigour. He appeared on Monday well and chearful; and about eight o'clock in the evening, he had a paralytic seizure; he continued sensible for near an hour; then he fell into a stupor, and remained perfectly insensible, without opening his eyes, till about half an hour after ten the next morning, when he expired, in the 68th year of his age, universally respected and universally lamented.

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The character, whose removal we deplore, was worthy to have his grave bedewed with our flowing tears. We cannot think of him without lamentation. And the service, to which I am called, I feel to be the most painful of the kind, that I ever performed. Our sorrows, sincere and lively as they are, require not to be cherished, but to be soothed and relieved by the brighter views, under which the death of Mr. Watson may be considered. We will comfort ourselves with the remembrance of his virtues; we will take pleasure in the contemplation of the reward he is gone to receive. To assist you to entertain these consoling thoughts, let me direct your attention to those words, which you will find in

MATT. XXV. 21.

HIS LORD SAID UNTO HIM; WELL DONE, THOU GOOD FAITHFUL SERVANT; THOU HAST BEEN FAITHFUL OVER A FEW THINGS, I WILL MAKE THEE RULER OVER MANY THINGS; ENTER THOU INTO THE JOY OF THY LORD.

THE Parable, of which these words are a part, contains interesting lessons of religious and moral instruction. We learn from it, to consider ourselves as the Servants of God, furnished with various talents and advantages, for the use of which we shall be called to an account. We are taught by it that our Lord, though he be withdrawn from
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our world and invisible to our sight, yet will return and reckon with us ; that when he comes again he will take a very condescending notice of the good servant and generously reward his fidelity : but that the slothful servant, who hath neglected the opportunities given him for virtue and usefulness shall be stript of the advantages he possessed, silenced in his pleas, and consigned over to shame and distress. We also learn from it that the reward which our Lord will bestow, will be granted in a manner the most honourable to the diligent and faithful servant, the most expressive of the judge's munificence and kindness. This is strongly and beautifully intimated in the text.

Here is a striking opposition between the service and the recompence ; between being " faithful over a few things" and being appointed " Ruler over many things. The servant is described as advanced from *that* inferior rank to be a partaker in the happiness of his Lord, or a sharer in his banquet ; " Enter thou into the joy thy of Lord." This distinction and happiness of the Faithful Christian will be heightened by the public nature of the process, when his integrity and diligence will be acknowledged and applauded in the view of his fellow-servants, and the testimony of his own conscience shall receive the sanction of his Lord and Judge. His Lord said unto him : " Well done,

“ thou good and faithful servant ; thou hast been
 “ faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler,
 “ over many things ; enter thou into the joy of
 “ thy Lord.” The words naturally direct our
 thoughts.

I. To the character of the good and faithful
 servant.

II. To the honour and reward which he will
 receive.

I. I am to consider the character of the good
 and faithful servant. The connection, in which
 this character stands in the parable will furnish some
 just and important hints on the nature and extent
 of it. It stands in opposition to an unprofitable
 servant, and it is applied to those who had received
 different talents and had made only a proportional
 use of them. It may be proper therefore to ob-
 serve,

I. That our fidelity is to be reckoned not by the
extent and *number* of our talents, but by the *use*
 of them. There may be equal fidelity, where un-
 equal advantages have been enjoyed. One receives
 five talents ; to another two only are allotted. But
 each doubling his respective talents, each equally
 approves himself a good and faithful servant. Ob-
 vious as is this remark, it is sometimes overlooked
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by persons when passing judgment upon their own character : and just as it is, it hath not due regard and weight paid to it. The modest and humble, especially when comparing their own attainments with others, who make a figure and are persons of the first eminence, are apt to fall into discouraging thoughts of themselves : because they measure their proficiency in wisdom and goodness not by the advantages and opportunities they have enjoyed, but by the greater advancements of some others, whose more enlarged capacities and more favourable opportunities they do not take into the account.

This is not doing justice to themselves, or entertaining honourable thoughts of their Master and Judge ; as if He would reap where He had not sowed, or gather where He had not strawed ; as if they had not been upright and diligent, because they had not originally been so richly endowed as others. He is a faithful Servant who makes an improvement proportional to the talents he has received : He, who if he has received two, gains two more ; or if five adds to them five others. “ To whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required.”

This is a consideration equally suited to excite the activity and diligence of those who are in the possession

possession of many talents : and to administer encouragement and comfort to those who are not able, through the enjoyment of much inferior advantages, to rise to very eminent attainments. It likewise affords a rule, by which each may judge of his own fidelity. There are diversities of gifts : the question is, in what proportion have I received them ; and how have I exerted myself according to what has been imparted to me ? Have I cultivated the powers I possess ? Have I filled up with probity and usefulness the station assigned me ?

One findeth himself endowed with a clear discernment and strength of judgement : another hath a tenacious memory. One hath a native calmness and serenity of mind : another feels a bold and daring spirit. One is favoured with all the advantages of a liberal education : another advances forward in life under very prosperous circumstances. One hath been placed in a situation propitious to his moral and religious improvement : another has enjoyed few advantages of a religious kind, been exposed to many temptations, and struggled through many difficulties. One suffers want : another abounds in wealth. One is assisted by the understanding of the wise, and the affection of the friend : another is left to the exertion of his own powers only. One hath an happy circle of connections, being blest by their virtues and joyful
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in their love: another finds his foes in those of his own house, and receives, if not hatred for his love, grief and sorrow from the temper and folly of those nearest to him. In such various circumstances equal attainments cannot be reached: yet the same spirit of fidelity may be exerted, and a proportional excellence of character may be required. This is one ingredient in the description of the good and faithful servant, that his activity and diligence will be suitable to his powers and advantages.

2. That his talents be not merely preserved, but *improved*. The faithful is opposed by our Lord to the unprofitable servant. The guilt of his character consisteth not in the abuse and perversion of his talents, but in the neglect of them. He is described as going and hiding his talent in the earth. He did not lose it, nor corrupt it, but he made no use of it: he paid no attention to the design, for which it was bestowed; nor applied it to any valuable purpose. He neither employed it in trade, as the others did their talents: nor lent it out to interest. He took care only to secure it safe, so that it might be ready to be produced at the requisition of his Lord, but had not exerted himself to make any accession to it, or derive any advantage from it. Thus his idle, inactive conduct by no means answered the expectations of his Lord, nor secured his own acquittal on the day of account.

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The character of the good and faithful servant stands in contrast with this. When he had received five talents, he went and traded with the same, in so diligent a manner, in the absence of his master, that he doubled the sum, and produced five talents more. He was not contented to return merely what was his lord's, but ambitious and solicitous to derive, by the use and improvement of his talents benefit from them.

This description of a faithful servant, points out our duty, shews what our Master requireth from us and is to be applied to all the various abilities and advantages which God hath given us. Our talents are not a deposit merely which we must produce again, without loss or injury, when it is demanded of us: but they form, as it were, a fortune put into our hands, with which we are to trade. He then, is the good and faithful servant, who employs all his capacities and endowments, all the gifts of Providence and all the blessings of the Gospel, to the glory of God, the benefit of others and his own salvation.

Hath he reason; he cultivates it and maintains its dominion over every lower power? Hath he genius; he directs the exercise of it to valuable and important purposes? Hath he instincts and passions; he follows their innocent direction, and by temperance preserves

preserves their vigour? Hath he a firm constitution and sound health; he makes it subservient and serviceable to the more cheerful and active prosecution of the great concerns of life? Hath he leisure and time; he doth not trifle it away in vanity and dissipation; but fills it up with wise, manly and useful employments? Hath he wealth; he doth good and communicates? Hath he kind and benevolent propensities; he cherisheth them by kind and friendly deeds? He rejoiceth with them that rejoice, and weepeth with them that weep? Hath he a soul capable of the knowledge of God and of his favour: he seeketh after this knowledge, and formeth a devotional temper? Hath he various privileges, the grace of the Gospel, the means of holiness and the hope of glory; he worketh out his salvation with fear and trembling, and giveth all diligence to make his calling and election sure? Doth his station in life afford him opportunities of usefulness; he filleth it up with vigorous exertions, and is a blessing to all around him?

In a word, he is "not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." Whatsoever his hands find to do, he doth it with all his might; anxious to "work the work of him that sent him" "into the world, while it is day;" solicitous to "finish his course with joy," and to account for his talents to the satisfaction of his great Lord. The
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hope of this is a spur to his diligence and integrity. The approbation of his Master, with all the blessings connected with it, is the glorious object on which his eye is fixed. Let us now reflect on the excellence of the sublime hope set before him, by considering

II. The *Reward* of the good and faithful servant:
 “ Well done, thou good and faithful servant;
 “ thou hast been faithful over a few things, I
 “ will make thee ruler over many things; enter
 “ thou into the joy of thy Lord.” This sentence comprehends three grand and animating ideas—
Honour—Advancement and Happiness.

1. *Honour.* What can be greater than the approbation of the judge? “ Well done, thou good and faithful servant.” The original word, *eu*, it has been observed, hath great force and energy, far beyond what can be exactly expressed in the English. It was used by the auditors or spectators in any public exercise, to express the highest applause, when any part had been excellently performed: *bravely done*, comes something near to it, but is not equally elegant and forcible*.

Every word is expressive of approbation, and marks the excellence of the character which is commended. It intimates, that probity and diligence had been not only displayed, but that they had been

* See Dr. Doddridge, in loc.

so uniformly supported and carried to such an height as fully to gratify the wishes and answer the expectation of the Lord. Applause is not only expressed, but expressed in the fullest manner, and with an emphatical and comprehensive, though concise encomium. Not a censure is insinuated: not an exception is hinted at: no mention is made of any fault: and every imperfection is covered. "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

Can you conceive of an honour to be compared to this? The approbation of Jesus, the Judge of the world, the impartial and perfect Judge of characters; pronounced in the name and by the authority of the Supreme God and Father of all; delivered before the grand convention of angels and men; uttered from his awful tribunal, when he shall appear in "his own glory, in the glory of the angels and in the glory of his Father." Every circumstance adds a lustre and dignity to the applause of Christ. The sentence, which adjudged a crown to the conquerors in the Grecian games, deserves not to be mentioned with this. The applause of the wise and good conferred on real goodness of character falls far below this. The commendation of men, is the commendation of those who are of like passions with ourselves; it is the commendation of weak and incompetent judges; often the opinion of prejudice; sometimes the breath of flattery; always shortlived and fleeting as the mortals who pronounce

it. But the applause of the Son of God is real substantial honour; deriving dignity from the unparalleled glory of him, who pronounceth it; and unequalled worth from its unchangeable duration. Who would not be glad to have his fidelity thus acknowledged? "Well done thou good and faithful servant!" How will the music of these words charm the ears! With what transports will these sounds fill the heart! But this is not applause only; the "good and faithful servant"

II. Will be *advanced*. "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." What delicacy and generosity are there in this sentence! The talents, which had been intrusted to his improvement are stiled a *few* things: the reward assigned is ample and noble. He, who had been only a steward, is exalted to the rank of a *Ruler*: where *few* things only had been improved, *many* things are bestowed as a recompence. Such is the munificence of the Judge. The virtues of the saints, the labours of the prophets and the sufferings of the apostles are not worthy to be compared with the glory, to which the generosity of the Lord will advance them*.

* Dominicus majorem summam quinque talentorum æque vocat exiguum, atq; postea v. 23. duos talenta. Nimirum exigua sunt comparata cum illis bonis, super quæ hunc fidelem servum postea constituet.

Quid enim est obedientia tam Apostolorum, quam aliorum fidelium comparata cum summo gaudio, quo in regno Christi, vel in vitâ aternâ fruuntur. Vide Wolzogenium in loc.

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Their applause will proceed from him, who hath all power given him in Heaven and Earth, and who will display his power in the grants he will make to his faithful servants. It is not for us to conceive in what sphere the righteous and good shall hereafter move; but the text plainly instruct us, that the present improvement of their talents will prepare them to fill some nobler post, and to receive larger communications of power and honour.

These may be various as their capacities. "There
 " is one glory of the sun, and another of the moon,
 " and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth
 " from another star in glory; and so it will be in
 " the resurrection of the dead." Every good and faithful servant shall rise from earth to heaven, from a more confined sphere to some nobler rank in proportion to his fidelity and diligence here. The inferior shall not look up to the higher with envy: nor the higher cast upon the lower the eye of disdain.

But, though we can form general ideas only concerning the future dignity of the approved servants of Christ, it is a matter of clear and delightful hope, that, for their faithful services, they shall be greatly preferred. They shall become like the angels, and commence the possessors of an eternal inheritance. How rich will be the crown that shall encircle their brows, the crown of righteousness, life and glory. And how bright the robes of victory

tory with which God shall clothe them ; when this mortal shall put on immortality ; when this corruptable shall put on incorruption ; when what is fown in dishonour, shall be raised in glory ; when what is fown in weakness, shall be raised in power. “ It doth not yet appear, what we shall be, but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is.” Once more this recompence will consist

III. In *happinefs* and fulness of joy. In the present state, satisfaction is by no means the certain attendant on high rank ; nor from the gratifications of ambition doth the mind receive full felicity. Power hath its fatigues : rank its mortifications ; and a crown its thorny cares. But the sentence which applauds the “ good and faithful servant” and advances him in the creation, shall also open the springs of felicity and pour in upon him the full tide of joy. “ Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord :” i. e. the entertainment which I intend for my friends at my coming. The Hebrew word which signifies joy, as often also denotes a festival. That joy here means a place devoted to festivity appears from the 30th verse, where the unprofitable servant is cast into outer darkness, or expelled from the chamber of entertainment, which was illuminated by lamps*.

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* *Dans la joye ; c'est-à-dire, foyez de la fête que je veux donner a mes amis, à mon arrivée. Le mot Hebreu *schimbbek*, qui signifie joye, signifie aussi souvent une fête, une jouissance,*

This is the recompence held forth to animate our fidelity, that it will secure dignity and happiness; the honour and entertainment of our master's heavenly kingdom. It is a most pleasing heightening, and recommendation of this happiness, that it will be the same with that which Christ himself possesseth: "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord:" partake of the honours to which I am advanced. The same delightful thought is held forth in other places. Thus he promises, "I go to prepare a place for you, "and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will "come again and receive you to myself, that where "I am, there you may be also." Thus the apostle declares that "if we suffer with him, we shall also "reign with him." And this is the incentive, with which our Lord addresses us in the book of Revelations: "To him that overcometh will I grant to "sit with me on my throne, as I also overcame and "am sat down with my father on his throne."

This, this is our sublime hope, that we shall be admitted, if faithful servants, associates with Christ, in the dignity and happiness of his exalted state. What high honour, what complete felicity doth

fance, un festin. Voyez Gen. 31. 27. 1 Chron. 29. 22. Le Clerc.

La joie se prend ici pour le lieu destiné à la joie & au festin, comme cela paroît par le verset 30 du le mauvais serviteur est jeté hors de la sale dans les ténèbres, par opposition aux flambeaux qui éclairoient cette sale. Voyez Luc. 12. 37. Beaujobre et L'enfant.

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this intimate ! What joy is this : pleasures for evermore ; joy unspeakable and full of glory ! With which no sorrow shall mingle : where no dangers shall threaten ; no calamity shall distress. In the prophetic language, “ no lion shall be there : nor
 “ any ravenous beast ; but the redeemed shall walk
 “ there, and the ransomed, of the Lord shall return,
 “ and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy
 “ on their heads : they shall obtain joy and glad-
 “ ness, and sorrow and sighing shall fly away.”

On the contemplation of these hopes, how natural is it to observe

I. The excellence of the gospel. It is the dispensation of light and grace ! The views, which it displays before us, are very clear and very encouraging : with what certainty, with what fulness of expression and brightness of imagery doth it speak of the reward that is laid up for the righteous ! How ample and munificent is the recompence, which it proposes to services, at best, but very feeble and imperfect ! Could the human heart raise it's hopes so high from it's frail virtue ? Did reason ever place a future state, before men, with such certainty and precision ? How level to our conceptions are the descriptions, which it gives of the solemn and glorious scenes ! How familiar and engaging in the language it useth. What a manifestation of mercy and favour is there in the process

process which it paints! We are at a loss, which most to admire, the assurance it giveth to our hopes, or the vastness of the reward it proposeth. We hear as it were, the Lord calling his servants to an account, and assigning to the faithful a reward infinitely surpassing their merit, and exceeding their hopes. We owe these discoveries to the Gospel. These assurances convince us, that we do not run with uncertainty; that we do not fight as one that beateth the air; that we do not serve an hard master.

As the line of duty is clearly drawn and strongly expressed; as great and invaluable aids are afforded us; so the faithfulness and munificence of our master are ascertained, and the discoveries made of his future measures towards us, are endearing and animating. We are called to usefulness and piety, by the most powerful incitements; and, where a consciousness of imperfection might justly depress the spirits, the display of our master's grace and liberality dissipates our fears and enlivens our hopes.

In this view how excellently is the Gospel adapted to our weakness: how well suited to affect and impress the heart! How valuable is this system of consolation and hope! We think of it with grief, we think of it with surprize, that any one can be an enemy, that any one can be indifferent to this

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excellent system. Can you consider its contents, the light and assurance which it carries into the most important subjects, where reason fails, and not feel the rising emotions of lively gratitude? This is the solace of your heart in the day of your trial, the anchor of your souls, the charter of your noblest hope. Let the grace, which hath communicated it, be the burthen of your songs now, as it will be that of your everlasting triumphant anthems above.

2. How important is the character we now sustain! We are the servants of God, entrusted with various talents, allotted a sphere of usefulness, candidates for the approbation of our great Lord at his coming, and then accountable to him for our conduct. Are we sufficiently apprised of our situation, and of the awful issues dependent upon it? It is required of a steward, that he be found faithful. Happy will be that servant, whom his Lord at his coming shall find to have been diligent and upright!

What is our conduct? What is our care? Many and various good gifts have we all received from the Father of lights: what hath been our improvement of them? How have our rational powers been employed? Hath the goodness of God in the gift of his son, and in the provision made through him, for our instruction, reformation and salvation, led us to true repentance towards God and faith in the Redeemer?

Redeemer? To what good purposes have we lived? Are we useful in the world, or mere cumberers of the ground? As to our time, is it wasted in trifling pursuits, or given to wisdom and the service of others? As to our substance, is it expended only upon ourselves; or doth it diffuse itself in blessings to others and relief to the afflicted? In what respects hath the world been the better for us? What are the pursuits which mark and form our distinguishing characters? What is our habitual temper towards God, and a future invisible state?

Let us pursue such enquiries as these, and thus anticipate the scrutiny of our Lord at his appearing. He will return; and we must all be called to give an account. In the view of that day, let us seriously ask ourselves, what account are we able to give? Let it be considered, that to have lived an indolent, useless life, to have done no good, will mark us for *unprofitable* servants, will draw down the indignation of the judge, and fix on us the doom of being cast into outer darkness, where there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. God grant, that nobler views may possess our minds; that more delightful prospects may be before us! God grant, that the world may be witnesses to our usefulness, that conscience may approve our fidelity, and that this may be a pledge of the future applause of the

judge. This will lay a foundation for joyful reflections and delightful hopes. Once more,

Lastly, with what pleasure may the faithful servant look for, and expect the return of his Lord. To the slothful and wicked servant, the appearance of the righteous judge must be terrifying. It must awaken every fear and fill his soul with anguish and distress. Whither can such flee from his presence? By what plea can such avert his displeasure? By what art elude his justice? By what successful opposition withstand his sentence? What awaiteth them? terror, dismay and ruin await them.

But not so the good and faithful servant. The trumpet sounds, the voice of the arch-angel announceth the coming of his Lord. His heart and his voice shall echo to the proclamation; "Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus." For then his faithfulness will be acknowledged: It is the master, whom he hath affectionately and zealously served, who is coming in the clouds of heaven; with words of grace on his lips and with a crown of glory in his hands: the master, who will not forget any work of faith, or labour of love: the master who will dispense to the faithful the rewards of eternity, and advance them to the seats of glory and bliss. Ere the humble and upright can urge his plea for a merciful

merciful acceptance. He will be accosted with the transporting sentence of applause, he will see the hand of his Lord stretched out to raise him to a throne of glory; he will behold the mansions of joy opening their everlasting gates to receive him. While conscious humility would disclaim all merit, his heart exults at the words of his Judge: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Happy saint, to whom this shall be said! Blissful day, on which his reward shall be announced! His work is finished. His trials are ended. He is discharged from his labours and hazards. His fidelity receiveth the sanction of heaven. His character is crowned with honour. Angels resound the joyful, "Well done." New dignities await him. Nobler scenes of activity open before him. He becometh an associate with his Lord in his glory and bliss. This is the hope of the real Christian. This is the end of his diligence and fidelity. This is his lot at the coming of his Lord.

How consolatory, my friends, are these thoughts under the sorrow we now feel. Your minds have undoubtedly applied the subject, as we have gone on to the very worthy friend and minister, whose death

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we now lament. Affection and justice require, that some tribute of respect should be paid to his character and name. You will expect from me a testimony to his merit and virtues; for your own hearts will long dwell, with fond regret, on the memory of both.

Mr. *Watson* was a native of Kettering, in Northamptonshire. He received his classical and academical learning, under two gentlemen, who were ornaments to literature and an honour to the dissenters; the former, at Kibworth, in Leicestershire, under Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Aikin, and Theological Professor, at Warrington; the latter under Dr. Doddridge. In the year 1748, he fixed with a small congregation at Coleford, under Mendip Hills. In 1755 he was invited to succeed in this place the late worthy Mr. Matthew Towgood: a gentleman, who though he withdrew from the services of the ministerial character, adorned the profession of Christianity by piety, integrity and virtue; and by his zeal and generosity was eminently serviceable to the cause of religious truth and liberty. Mr. *Watson* fulfilled the duties of the Christian Pastor here, thirty-eight years. With what a fervor in the pulpit, with what a benevolence of temper, and purity of manners out of it, you have all been witnesses.

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His discourses were distinguished by a devotional spirit, a serious strain, a practical tendency, and an animated delivery. His piety was of the liberal and rational kind. His views of religion were just and enlarged. His spirit, truly catholic, embraced those who differed from him with respect and affection: his good offices were not limited to any party, but were rendered to all whom he had an opportunity of or ability to serve. Besides a general excellence and worth of character, which universally displayed itself through his life; he had his peculiar virtues; which at once, conciliated love and commanded respect.

He had great sensibility of temper, which was not the instinct of nature only, but the effect of principle. With respect to the relations of husband and parent he was exceeded by none, in an affectionate and tender deportment*. With a firmness of constitution, that for a number of years scarcely

* Mr. Watson, married in 1763 Miss Mary Codrington, of a respectable family, in the town of Bridgewater; after an happy union of eleven years, she died on the 28th or 29th of March, 1774, sincerely lamented and beloved by all her friends; leaving a mourning husband, and four children, to want the forming care of a wife, and affectionate mother. This affliction followed close on the loss of a girl, who was buried on the 5th of the same month, aged six years. Of those who survived, the youngest, Miss Sarah Watson, died of a consumption, in April 1792.

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knew what was fatigue or pain, and afforded him no sense of nervous complaints, I have often wondered at the great compassion he showed for such as laboured under those complaints, while from pure benevolence he entered into their feelings.

He was a man of no expence; satisfied and happy with the plainest accommodations of life, or articles of the table; strictly and uniformly œconomical: but generous, where the wants of others required it, and honourable in all his transactions. He was the friend of the distressed, and in him the poor have lost their patron and benefactor.

With a frankness, sincerity and firmness in declaring his own sentiments and acting upon them, under the different occurrences of public life, which did him honour, he united a prudence, temper and courteousness, that disarmed resentment.

Rectitude was his principle of conduct. When he lived at Coleford, he had a cordial and unanimous invitation, to settle with a large and respectable congregation at Portsmouth, in connection with their aged pastor*. Integrity, as he conceived, obliged him to disclose to that gentleman, who laid great stress on his own ideas about the subject, his difference of sentiment from him concerning the

* The Rev. Mr. Norman.

doctrine of the Trinity, and the person of Christ; and because it was apprehended by him, that this would make Mr. Watson's settlement hurtful to the society, and probably produce a division, he declined the invitation; but suppressed the reason, lest the mention of it should create a displeasure against their minister. In no case did the purity and integrity of his mind appear with more consistency and force than in political matters; where, alas! such is the venality of this age and country, men in general, seem least solicitous to preserve and follow integrity. Mr. Watson had a just sense of the true interests of his country, he felt strongly for them, and not a *declaration* or action of His tended to subvert or undermine them. He was above fear and above influence.

But, though his virtue was firm, it was not of the stern and rigorous kind. He was candid to others. He viewed their conduct with a mild, indulgent eye. He appreciated their good qualities, and lost sight of nothing in any one, that was estimable and praise worthy.

He was the sincere, affectionate and faithful friend: to whom you might unbosom yourself without reserve or distrust; and from whose sympathy, activity and judgment, you might expect every service in his power. Is there one of this congregation,

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who

who will not be ready, with gratitude, to own that he has found him, as circumstances required, the father, or brother, or friend? I condole with you in your loss. I feel my own, and shall long feel it.

Besides observing, that he was of a most healing, pacific temper, shall I add, that he felt much under the apprehension, that his ministerial labours were not successful, especially to the *rising generation*; at least not so useful as he ardently desired them to be. I have heard him express his great concern; I have seen him weep—at this thought.

But his fears and anxieties on this point, we trust rose too high. We trust, that the instructions, which, during so many years, you have received from the lips of so excellent a person cannot be lost: but will be remembered. Did they not duly impress your hearts? And will they *not go on* to produce their effect? Yes, they will. You will remember *them*. You will remember his virtues. You will be animated by the recollection to follow his steps. “Being dead,” he will yet speak to you by the force and beauties of his example.

In the choice of a successor, you will have particular occasion, my friends, to recollect and imitate that mild, yielding, condescending temper, of which
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he was on all occasions an amiable pattern. Here it will be necessary to condescend one to another, and to act with harmony. In the concerns of a social nature, this is always necessary. Your religious improvement, your happy settlement, your interest and your reputation, as a society, permit me to say, *depend upon this*. And shall it be doubted that every consideration of this nature, will have great weight with you? Could the transactions of this world reach your deceased pastor, how would your peace and harmony rejoice his mind.

Ever, ever dear to the worthy offspring of my departed friend will be the virtues and memory of their father. It was, through a kind providence, their felicity, that he was not removed from them, till they were grown up to years of maturity; had enjoyed all the benefits of his example and care; knew how to estimate his excellent character; and had the impressions of his virtues fixed, indelibly, on their hearts.

With the affectionate remembrance of those virtues, let us all sooth^d our sorrows. They embalm his memory and perfume it. But this is the least of our consolation. We can entertain the most gladdening sentiments. Holy joy mingles with our sorrow. Our valuable friend is no more in this world. But we can descry him beyond the grave,
rising

rising to honour and bliss. We have committed him to that silent repository, in the full and joyful expectation of the great applauding day, and of the glories of an everlasting kingdom. His eyes will open again—to see his Lord coming in the clouds of heaven. His ears will again open—to hear the sentence of approbation from the lips of his Master, whom he faithfully served. At the voice of his Saviour “he will spring up from the dust, and “draw in immortal breath.”

Till then, dear excellent man farewell. Farewell, thou affectionate parent. Farewell, thou faithful and beloved pastor and friend, Long may thy memory live in our breasts. May thy virtues survive in our lives. Farewell, till we are all conveyed with thee before the throne of the descending Judge. On that day may we behold thy acceptance and triumphs and share thy honour and bliss. May the Judge applaud us with thee. May the people, who have sat under thy instructions, have heard the word of life from thy lips, and seen the power of the gospel displayed in thy life, then appear as witnesses to thy fidelity and trophies of thy success. Then in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming; may they appear as thy joy and crown of rejoicing. Amen.

F I N I S.

